

NATO's Lisbon Summit and the New Strategic Concept

Report of the lunch meeting with Jamie Shea and Julian Lindley-French

The Netherlands Atlantic Association organised a well-attended lunch meeting in 'Sociëteit De Witte' on Friday 22 October. Subject of the meeting was the upcoming NATO summit in Lisbon and the new Strategic Concept, which will be decided upon there. Keynote speakers were Jamie Shea, Director Policy Planning in the Private Office of the Secretary General to NATO, and Julian Lindley-French, Eisenhower Professor of Defence Strategy at the Netherlands Defence Academy, Special Professor of Strategic Studies at the University of Leiden, and Senior Associate Fellow of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. After the introduction of both speakers, there was time for questions regarding the new Strategic Concept and the Lisbon Summit.



Jamie Shea started with explaining why the Lisbon summit is so interesting. NATO is making this summit the most important meeting since London in 1990. Lisbon will redesign NATO to be relevant for the 21st century. This is done around four pillars: the publication of a new Strategic Concept, the reform of the NATO organisation, the operation in Afghanistan and a new relationship with Russia. A big difference with former documents on strategic concepts is that this time the process of drafting it followed another path. The focus of the Strategic Concept is on the implementation of it. There have been broad consultations at the base of the text and decisions have been made on an intellectual basis. Furthermore, it is written after the main issues and goals had already been identified instead of just being an analysis of the current strategic environment.

After this conclusion, Dr. Shea continued with the contents of the Strategic Concept. He identified three basic lines of action. The first is centred around the question what deterrence and defence really mean. Second, NATO tries to determine how it should be a good crisis management organisation and finally, how it should reach out to global partners. Regarding deterrence and defence, there will be a re-pledging of Article 5. NATO is still a nuclear power and it will keep its commitments. Although a nuclear-free world is the ideal, the nuclear deterrence remains a key component of the alliance. There is also a non-classic face of deterrence however, as new strategic challenges appear, such as energy security, proliferation of ballistic missiles and cyber-attacks. This will have to be countered by linking Article 5 to these scenarios and by investing more in operational capabilities in these specific fields. Deterrence and defence will thus have to be updated for use in the 21st century.

The second line of action concerns NATO's crisis management capabilities. The Strategic Concept starts out on the premise that Afghanistan will probably not be the last operation of its sort to be conducted by NATO. This means the organisation has to adapt to a different way of working and become better able to execute this kind of missions. The alliance will

have to reorganise its structure to be able to share intelligence between partners, make early interventions possible and integrate other organisations in an early stage: the so called 'comprehensive approach.' Also NATO should create its own civilian planning capabilities, a recommendation made by the 'Group of Experts' that advised NATO in drafting the Strategic Concept. By doing this, the alliance will easier be able to link up with organisations like the EU and UN, but can also initiate civilian implementations or call up civilian capabilities from member states.

Third, Dr. Shea emphasised that it is extremely important NATO extends the good relations with non-member countries beyond the mission in Afghanistan. There are currently 21 non-NATO countries active in Afghanistan and especially countries like Australia and Japan will prove to be important partners in security issues in the future. This will be essential in crisis management operations, as well as in the field of energy security, proliferation and cyber security. To summarise, the Strategic Concept accepts four things: NATO has a much more global outlook, it knows and accepts its limitations, it lets loose its historical focus on operations in favour of involvement in a much broader spectrum of security issues and, finally, it realises that building a global network of partners is necessary. Dr. Shea ended his address with some remarks on a condition-driven strategy for Afghanistan and a warning not to cut too deep in command structures and headquarters when reforming the organisation.

Next, Julian Lindley-French shared his views on the new Strategic Concept. He started with two remarks. First, he noted that 'the devil is in the detail. NATO can decide so much, but the effort comes down to the nations.' Second, the Strategic Concept has to close the gap between strategy, affordability, synergy and capability. Today's challenge is to do more, while at the same time try to spend less money. This requires a different mindset. Cooperation and sharing of responsibility are necessary. National pride is working counterproductively and is stimulating inefficiency. 'The Strategic Concept will establish a new balance between protection of the home base and projection of Allied power.' Europe has a role to play in the wider world. Although 90 percent of this is diplomatic, it must be based on a credible and legitimate military base.



To achieve the goals in the Strategic Concept, NATO will need advanced deployable forces. Unless the member states will do something about the extremely inefficient defence spending, NATO will not be able to defend its legitimate interests in 2020. Lindley-French therefore advocates getting rid of many headquarters in smaller countries. Also, NATO has to invest hugely in IT-capabilities to counter new threats to information-based societies. A striking example of new security challenges is the operation in Afghanistan. The solution in Afghanistan is not limited by creating security, but much more in integrating the country in the world economy. The key to this is competing in the pool of unemployed young men. New partners are critical since big economic projects require a regional approach. This approach makes the new Strategic Concept different from all the previous ones, which were

Euro-American centred. Worldwide partners are to be involved in every NATO operation, but keeping NATO standards is important since 'we do not want to re-invent the wheel every time we deploy.'

'The comprehensive approach is both a blessing and a curse.' The 'whole of government approach' is absolutely necessary to stabilise countries, but it is also extremely difficult. Most probably, NATO will have to conduct Afghanistan-like operations in the future. There has to be consensus across the whole alliance about how to do this. It is therefore necessary to develop indicators on the input and output side of strategy and operations. In this way we know what we want to achieve and we recognise it, when we have achieved it. This has to be clear for every officer at every level of command. Unless NATO is transformed to an organisation with efficient forces, well organised, structured on the basis of function and with dedicated, educated people, every effort is futile. This is what we have to start working on, the day after Lisbon.

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